

Mechanicstun. Oct. 14th 46

Dear David

I write to you as seldom as I think of you often; but soon that is better than to have the proportion reversed, and what my letters lack'd in sincerity made up in beauty of style and purity of diction. We refuse to believe a liar, you know, when he speaks the truth; and one comes to hate a Chesterfieldian epistle for its very elegance; one says it can't be hearty. My letters, it is true will never run this danger; but yet, dear David, your kindness may have many an occasion for construction, from it, an excuse for their coarseness and inaccuracies. And why should not I, in writing to one whom I dearly love, take some pains to make my letter not only readable but pleasing; and not of my letter the index of my thoughts, but my thoughts conducive to his happiness? It is certainly the purest selfishness to lavish our carefulness upon strangers, to make them friends, while we throw the vilest scraps of chance thought & feeling to our old friends, as good enough for those of whom we are sure. Your last is dated July 24. and gave me great satisfaction. You seem to be, (as usual), at least tolerably happy and it is very evident out of what fountain you drink your water. No man that can lie under a brick wall and think quietly of it, popping over upon him in the next earthquake, while he commits himself into his Father's hand, or rather because he has long ago done so, can be far from the full assurance of hope and faith, whoever else may be. Love has cast him out fear.

You know I have a singularly treacherous memory, and see so many scenes & faces & do so many different things & am so garrulous withal on air and paper, that it is utterly impossible for me to imagine what were the contents of the letter, to which yours of the 24 is the answer, except so far as I can guess its leading ideas from the way you handle them. But whatever I said then, I could scarcely have meant anything conducive to strengthening Babbage's eternal-organic theory of Universal Government. For I look upon it as no better than distraction to warm hearty piety as well as uncalled for upon philosophical principles. Why should we, (as you say,) thrust God from the universe he has made and bid

bid him "hands off" as soon as the world top has spun from the
end of the Rod? If in him we live & move & have our being, — why
certainly, by him, we act. And if it be objected, that then the language
of Emmons presents itself for justification, one might perhaps reply
God hates the filth of this world in which he works, ~~so soon~~, ~~but~~
when his work is done, he will purge it from his hands of asbestos
in the fire of his wrath. But that might be blasphemy. We must
take off our shoes here, for it is holy ground & cover our ~~mouths~~
too for we are of a nation of unclean & very rash lips. The Lord
spared me mercifully for the many wicked things I have said about
his works and ways & teach me both modesty and wisdom.

(But perhaps, David, we may be too stringent in our theory, which—
you side it lean. One might call this le juste milieu: viz. Laws
certainly govern, or God governs by laws, everything that lives and
happens in ordinary. Many of these laws seem sempiternal, as
e.g. the gravitation and rotation of matter in masses. While we
are to acknowledge no created, resident force in these laws, but his
own high hand always — we may still behold his hand ^{as} rather obedient
to than superior to the same. As one moves ^{one's} arm in striking
so that ^{one's} hand describes a curve, under the laws both of general
dynamics and of ^{one's} human physiology, (anatomy ~~for~~ his arm
being radius to his hand from the shoulder &c) — even so, God, making
fixed laws from the beginning to govern & guide, excite and restrain
his own universal omnipotence, exerting itself in obedience to
such laws, in & through & upon all things, — may be said to stand
aside, as to continuous design & planning, from the execution of
his plans. The man intends to strike with his fist, according to
the laws of his structure, an object; ^{the} first plans, then exerts a
force, but that force acts out the plan through & under the laws
aforesaid. The man's will is inspirative so to speak as soon as
he has commissioned the force under law, but stands ready to
interfere with the law upon any necessity for so doing, e.g. if the
object shift its place. So God's putting his ever active omnipotence
in commission under general laws, stands ready while law and
force ~~are~~ are doing their regular work, to interfere and — work
a miracle, (make the regular force an eccentric one.)